

VZCZCXRO1442
RR RUEHIK
DE RUEHIK #0046 3101529
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0480
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 0355
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUEHIK/AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI 0523

UNCLAS THESSALONIKI 000046

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/SE, DS/IP/EUR, DS/DSS/TIA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [KCRM](#) [GR](#)

SUBJECT: BUS HIJACKING INTENATIONAL SEMINAR IN THESSALONIKI

¶1. (SBU) From September 28 through October 2, 2009 Greek police authorities conducted an international bus-jacking seminar at their new police training center in the northern Greece city of Veria (36 miles west of Thessaloniki.) The seminar was organized by the Greek police and was conducted for 21 Greek police experts, a total of 10 police officers from the neighboring countries of Cyprus, Serbia, Albania, and Bosnia and also two observers, one of whom is the FSNI at Consulate General Thessaloniki.

¶2. (SBU) The police Inspector general of Northern Greece opened the well organized event. Experienced instructors from the Greek Crisis Management Division, hostage negotiators, Special Counter Terrorist unit staff, Athens airport police and Thessaloniki Security police analyzed bus hijackings that have occurred in Greece during the past ten years. The class worked on actual threat scenarios in a workshop format. Police generals observed a hands-on exercise that lasted five hours. Police Chief Tsiatouras closed the seminar and hosted a closing reception for participants and media.

¶3. (SBU) Post's representative at the seminar left with a very positive impression of both the seminar and its content and also the new training center which Greek police believe will become a benchmark for similar facilities in the Balkans.

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